

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 /076 W
-----082720 230953Z /12

R 230832Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5820
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION USNATO
USINT HAVANA

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BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, SP
SUBJECT: POLITICAL MISCELLANY

1. SUMMARY: THE CONSTITUTION IS NOW IN SENATE COMMITTEE,
WHERE IT LIKELY WILL STAY WELL INTO SEPTEMBER. THE
ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE KING WILL VISIT ARGENTINA IN NOVEM-
BER HAS SPARKED PROTESTS FROM THE LEFT (PSOE AND PCE) AND
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WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CONGRESS
OF DEPUTIES' PERMANENT COMMISSION ON AUGUST 28. UCD
CONGRESS DATES ARE SET FOR OCTOBER 19-21. END SUMMARY

2. CONSTITUTION SITREP. THE SENATE COMMITTEE, TECHNICALLY
CONSTITUTED AS A SUBCOMMITTEE, MET BEHIND CLOSED DOORS
AUG. 9-17, TO SCREEN THE 1,254 AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT

CONSTITUTION WHICH HAD BEEN PRESENTED BY THE VARIOUS SENATE PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL SENATORS. ALMOST 100 OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WERE VOLUNTARILY RETIRED. OF THE 1166 AMENDMENTS REMAINING, THE "SUBCOMMITTEE" RECOMMENDED THAT 167 BE CONSIDERED BY THE FULL COMMITTEE, AND THAT 660 BE WITHDRAWN BY THEIR DRAFTERS. IT ABSTAINED ON THE REMAINING 339. THE RECOMMENDATION FOR WITHDRAWAL IS NOT BINDING, HOWEVER, AND ALL 1166 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS MAY NOW BE Aired IN COMMITTEE.

3. THE COMMITTEE THEN BEGAN PUBLIC SESSIONS ON THE AMENDMENTS AUG. 18, BUT AS OF AUG.22 IT HAD ONLY COMPLETED ARTICLES 1 AND 2. ALTHOUGH THE FIRST FEW ARTICLES ARE THE OBJECT OF MANY MORE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS THAN ARE MOST OTHER SECTIONS OF THE DRAFT, THIS SLOW PACE HAS PROMPTED PREDICTIONS THAT COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS WILL LIKELY CONTINUE WELL INTO SEPTEMBER. (THERE ARE 163 ARTICLES IN DRAFT CONSTITUTION PASSED BY THE CONGRESS.) DEBATE THUS FAR HAS FOLLOWED THE LINES ESTABLISHED DURING CONGRESS CONSIDERATION (MADRID 9117 AND PREVIOUS), WITH THE AUTONOMY PROVISIONS REMAINING PROBABLY THE BIGGEST QUESTION MARK. SENATE PRESIDENT FONTAN (FOR UCD) AND BASQUE PNV SENATOR MIGUEL UNZUETA HAVE INITIATED TALKS ON THOSE ARTICLES, BUT THUS FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO APPARENT MOVEMENT TOWARD AN AGREEMENT.

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4. UCD CONGRESS SET. ORGANIZATIONAL WORK WITHIN THE GOVERNING UCD IS PROCEEDING Apace AND THE NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UNDER "COORDINATOR" RAFAEL ARIAS SALGADO SEEMS TO BE DOING AN EXCELLENT JOB OF GETTING THE PARTY INTO SHAPE. THE UCD'S CONSTITUENT CONGRESS WAS SET BACK FOR A MONTH AND IS NOW FIXED FOR OCTOBER 19-21. US NOTABLES INVITED TO ATTEND AS OBSERVERS INCLUDE SENATORS BYRD, KENNEDY, MCGOVERN AND JAVITS.

5. KING'S ITINERARY EVOKES CONTROVERSY. THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE KING WOULD INCLUDE ARGENTINA IN HIS NOVEMBER TRIP TO LATIN AMERICA (HE ALSO WILL VISIT MEXICO AND PERU) IMMEDIATELY SPARKED PROTESTS FROM THE SOCIALISTS (PSOE) AND COMMUNISTS (PCE).

--THE PSOE, WHICH IS HYPERSENSITIVE ABOUT ANY PERCEIVED SUPPORT OF RIGHTIST DICTATORSHIPS IN LATIN AMERICA AND MAINTAINS A DEEPLY EMOTIONAL COMMITMENT TO THE ARGENTINE AND CHILEAN OPPOSITION, ALSO FORMALLY CALLED FOR A MEETING OF THE CONGRESS OF DEPUTIES' PERMANENT COMMISSION (THE CONGRESS IS IN RECESS) TO HEAR THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S EXPLANATION OF THE BUENOS AIRES STOP (THE MEETING HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR AUG. 28).

--THE PRESS PREDICTABLY HAS JUMPED IN ON DIFFERENT
SIDES OF THE ISSUE, WITH EL PAIS CALLING FOR AN
INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT OF THE ARGENTINE LEG OF THE
TRIP, DIARIO 16 SUGGESTING THAT THE KING BALANCE ARGENTINA
WITH A STOP IN HAVANA, AND YA AND ABC WONDERING WHAT ALL
THE FUSS IS ABOUT AND ACCUSING THE PSOE, IN PARTICULAR,
OF EMPLOYING A DOUBLE STANDARD, SINCE ITS LEADERS HAVE
VISITED A NUMBER OF DICTATORSHIPS, AMONG THEM THE SOVIET
AND THE CUBAN.

--FONMIN OREJA RESPONDED PUBLICLY TO THESE CRITICISMS

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THAT THE KING HAD LONG AGO ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO
VISIT ALL LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES (WHICH HAD EVOKED

NO OBJECTIONS FROM THE LEFT AT THE TIME), THAT IT WAS PART OF A POLICY OF "NO DISCRIMINATION" AS TO POLITICAL REGIMES (THE KING ALREADY HAD VISITED CHINA AND IRAN, FOR EXAMPLE), AND THAT IT WAS A VISIT TO THE ARGENTINE PEOPLE AND NOT IN ANY WAY A DEMONSTRATION OF SUPPORT FOR THE VIDELA REGIME.
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6.COMMENT: IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT THE KING HAS INADVERTENTLY BECOME THE SUBJECT OF A CONTROVERSY, BECAUSE OF THE RUCKUS OVER THE ARGENTINA TRIP, AND NO ONE, INCLUDING THE PSOE AND PCE, APPEARS VERY COMFORTABLE WITH THIS DEVELOPMENT. WHATEVER THE MERITS OF THE CASE, THE REACTION OF THE PCE AND PSOE WAS PREDICTABLE.

7. INTERESTINGLY, WEEKLY CAMBIO 16, WHOSE LINE IS ALL TOO OFTEN REFLEXIVELY RADICAL CHIC, LEAPT TO THE KING'S DEFENSE, IMPLYING THAT THE LEFT WAS OVERREACTING AND, IN ANY CASE, LAYING THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE VISIT IN SUAREZ' LAP, RATHER THAN WITH THE KING. ACCORDING TO CAMBIO, SUAREZ HAD PERSUADED THE KING TO INCLUDE ARGENTINA IN HIS ITINERARY IN ORDER TO BALANCE SUAREZ' OWN UPCOMING TRIP TO CUBA (HE IS SCHEDULED TO VISIT VENEZUELA SEPT. 7-8, CUBA SEPT. 9-10), AND TO PLACATE THE ARGENTINES, WHOSE INVITATION SUAREZ ALREADY HAD TURNED DOWN TWICE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DOMESTIC POLITICAL COSTS OF SUCH A VISIT. TODMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMMITTEE MEETINGS, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MADRID09666
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780344-0713
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780833/aaaabbnc.tel
Line Count: 205
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bccc305d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1649709
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL MISCELLANY
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bccc305d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014